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George Inness and the Science of Landscape (review)

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truly bourgeois" (102). Still, merchants' social standing "remained tenuous" as "the region's farmers, planters, and artisans often viewed the merchant's commercial world" with "suspicion or outright hostility" (40).

If the merchant operated "within a cultural and economic no-man's-land" (75) in the antebellum period, he became "the ultimate outsider in the embattled Confederacy" (179). Merchants were often reluctant to secede, as they accurately foresaw the disruption that war would bring to their business and their families. They probably could not foresee the hostility and "flow of abuse" that by 1863 condemned them as "rapacious, unpatriotic, and alien" in a Confederate society suffering from shortages and rampant inflation (187). Yet merchants were an important element of continuity between the Old South and the New South and were ready at war's end to "embrace the same goals as 'bourgeois' New York businessmen." Byrne suggests that scholars have "underestimated the economic continuity that bound the antebellum, Confederate, and postbellum South into a commercial whole" (208).

An appendix summarizes Byrne's analysis of merchants in twenty-two counties selected from nine states in the 1850 census. Averaging only 1.8 percent of the free population, these merchants (virtually all of whom were male) were predominantly southern in origin, tended to be in their thirties, averaged \$2,542 in real estate, and had an average family size of 4.5. Roughly one-quarter had a clerk living in their homes. Nearly one-quarter owned slaves, and the average size of their slaveholdings was 7.9 (209-14).

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GEORGE INNESS AND THE SCIENCE OF LANDSCAPE. By Rachel Ziady DeLue. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2004.

The painter George Inness is known for hazy atmospheres, soft colors, and blurred forms in prosaic landscapes that seem quite unlike the detailed and dramatic vistas of his peers in the Hudson River School of landscape painting. While Inness's career followed similar patterns to theirs, Rachel Ziady DeLue ascribes his divergent style to his unique "scientific" system of painting. DeLue's book successfully restores awareness of what contemporaries considered the strangeness and idiosyncrasy of Inness's art. She argues that Inness is important because his very oddities demonstrate that American nature was a place open not only to statements of national identity, but to artists and writers who wanted to theorize how the world worked, by experimenting with science, religion, and the limits of perception.

The book is not a biography, nor organized chronologically, as DeLue believes sociopolitical circumstances say little about picture-making. Instead, the first three chapters offer an intellectual history of Inness's philosophy, painstakingly uncovering his construction in words and paint of a model for "spiritual sight" (3). As a self-proclaimed metaphysician, Inness's artistic theory and practice drew on both Emanuel Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences between the spiritual and the natural, and contemporary optics. By literally reforming vision, DeLue argues, Inness intended his art to bring the viewer's perceptions closer to the divine. DeLue sympathetically and comprehensively accounts for the convoluted psychological and physiological strands informing Inness's thought, and is equally attentive to how his process of painting exemplified his aims. Subsequent chapters turn to Inness's earlier, more conventional picturesque and allegorical pictures, on which she can then project the same struggle—albeit through poetry and moral associationism—to create an alternative model for acquiring knowledge of the world. DeLue's analysis of the terms of nineteenth-

century art criticism, a source she effectively exploits throughout, culminates in a final chapter on Inness's "signature" pictures of the late 1880s and 1890s. She convincingly shows that the Impressionist way of seeing pushed him to emphasize the anti-realist, artificial ordering of his own compositions.

Inness was no outsider. His desire for art to elevate viewers, educating their vision away from material interests and toward lofty spiritual or social perspectives, was shared, as DeLue notes, by friends and patrons like Henry Ward Beecher and Fletcher Harper of *Harper's Weekly*, as well as by much Progressive thought of the later nineteenth century. Influential critics in New York's decorative and symbolist circles embraced Inness, which suggests that his practice of art could indeed be normalized by comparison, if not to the Hudson River School, then as DeLue implies, to artists like Albert Pinkham Ryder, John La Farge, and Louis Comfort Tiffany. They too rejected the vulgarity of the real and the eclecticism of the academy in favor of a richly-colored artful ideal unavailable to those with less godlike perceptions. Her book is thus valuable for anyone interested in how nineteenth-century spirituality and aesthetic theory, in reaction to their increasing exclusion from empirical science, converged in an effort to redefine truth and nature on their own terms.

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THE VIEW FROM VERMONT: Tourism and the Making of an American Rural Landscape. By Blake Harrison. Burlington: University of Vermont Press. 2006.

The View from Vermont is an interesting new addition to a growing literature on the history of rural tourism—a topic rich with implications for environmental history, the history of consumer culture, and the social history of the interactions between city and countryside. Harrison focuses on Vermont, that most quintessentially rural state, in order to explore the ways in which the cultural meanings of "rural" have been constructed (and marketed) during the twentieth century and to show the impact of those processes on the landscape.

Vermont's identity as a rural place has been central to its appeal to tourists since the second half of the nineteenth century. As Harrison points out, though, the meanings of that rural identity have been a moving target, affected by shifting interests, priorities, and technologies. One common theme that persists throughout the time period he examines, however, are the tensions between rural realities based on productive work and the desires of tourists to embrace a different and leisure-based vision of the countryside.

Harrison begins his discussion of rural tourism in Vermont with the lakeside resort hotels and exclusive fish and game clubs that catered to wealthy urban tourists during the late-nineteenth century. In addition to providing a boon for the local economy, however, these elite sportsmen's clubs began posting their land against hunting by local inhabitants, violating local customary practices and creating visible markers of class distinction.

More middle-class tourists vacationed on the farm, either by boarding with a farm family or by purchasing an abandoned farm as a summer home, and the emergence of clusters or colonies of urban professionals, writers, and academics ensconced in their vacation homes also complicated social relations in Vermont communities. As Harrison put it, "Vermont's abandoned landscape became a palimpsest on which vacationers inscribed a new rural aesthetic based on leisure and consumption rather than on productive agricultural work. As the scale of their efforts grew, as summer homes spread into communities statewide, vacationers exerted an increasing degree of power over landscape and identity in rural Vermont" (69).